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of the farm by renting additional land, as European peasants typically did,[5] since there is very little land available for rent and the returns are not immediate. Farmers will try to avoid this by acquiring land grants to increase subsistence agriculture.

Expenditures and earnings were studied in six families over varying periods of time from ten days to one year. The data are summarized below.

Family No. 1, consisting of a husband, his wife, and their married daughter separated from her husband and child, is able to meet all of their need for corn and brown sugar and most of their need for beans by the crops they raise on one-half hectare of ejido land in hot country, one-half hectare of ejido land in the township, and three-quarters hectare of privately owned, irrigated land in the township. On their irrigated land, they grow one-half hectare of wheat and one-quarter hectare of corn. In hot country they grow corn, beans, and sugar cane on the margins of the field. The cane is ground in a cooperatively owned mill, and their crop in 1965 produced 144 *tapas*, or measures of one kilogram worth 5 pesos. In addition to 200 pesos earned for the wheat crop, 100 pesos for the bean crop, 298 pesos for corn, this farmer earned 808 pesos for outside work. His high wage income is due to his working for an American at twice the usual daily pay. The farmer buys coffee by the twenty-five-pound bag costing 62 pesos in hot country, a saving of about one-half the retail price of coffee in the town, where it is sold at 5 or 7 pesos at pound. In twelve months of recorded expenditures, the family spent 609.50 pesos or 83 percent of their budget on food, 40 pesos or 5 percent of their budget on clothing and 82 pesos or 11 percent of their budget on medicine.

The high expenditures in the case of family No. 2, consisting of a man, his wife, and two mature sons, was due to the fact that one of the boys was carrying on a betrothal suit. The bride-price had been fixed at 500 pesos, toward which the family was contributing whatever excess of income over expenditures it had. The son who was seeking a wife worked fifty-six days in the sawmill at a wage of 15 pesos per day during the six-month period recorded, earning 255 pesos. In addition, he and his brother earned 160 pesos for agricultural work for other families in the village.

5. Chayanov (1966:7) demonstrated that Russian peasant families expanded the size of their farms when the subjective needs of the family increased, not as a response to market prices for crops or rents.

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highly stratified primitive society, which remains static: it lacks the flexibility and mobility that exists in modern societies.

The history of the ejido program in Tzo'ontahal in the first few years after it was organized in 1937 seemed to confirm this conclusion. Its immediate effect was to block the flow of labor and goods in the regional and national markets. The ejidatarios were no longer forced to sell their labor at the prevailing rate of 25 cents a day, a wage which was not enough to supply the needs of even one man much less those of a household. Children and women formerly had to work with their husbands in the coffee fincas in order to meet their most immediate consumption needs. The independence that the ejido tract gave meant that men could withhold their own labor and that of the subordinate members of the family from such exploitation. The second harvests coming from the ejido plots in low country freed the Indians from having to buy corn in July, August, and September at the inflated market prices which took advantage of the scarcity of this basic necessity.

The political effect of the ejido in the early days was to fortify the corporate community against the shocks of the outside world. The first lands acquired were primarily allotments of corporate lands alienated by the laws of 1856 and 1876. Populations remained in situ, whether they were foreign Indians working on the expropriated estates, or residential communities created in the sixteenth century as crown towns.

The township of Amatenango acquired its first ejido land grant in 1937. One of the early promoters of the ejido, a *revestido* Indian (one who has adopted western clothing) from Huistán who had been a laborer on one of the fincas within the township limits, threatened to become a rural *cacique*, or local boss, comparable to those who emerged from the agrarian revolt in the central plateau (Friedrich 1962). This leader was elected president, but during his term of office he was expelled because of his attempt to secure house plots in the center for himself and other Huistecan Indians residing in the barrio of Yetawitz (Chapter 9).

The stabilizing effects of the ejido in its earlier phase have been upset in recent years. As the population of the center expanded, new families migrated to the nearby barrios contiguous to the town center. These new set-

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tional economy and polity at a more rapid pace than has ever occurred in the past. Typical of this new movement is the recently established ejido of Brindis, formed by a core of landless Indians from the town working with acculturated Indians from Teopisca. Whether the political unity which has developed in the course of establishing their claim to the land will continue to provide a base for community development will depend on the encouragement and support by national institutions.

Within Indian communities of highland Chiapas, the ejido program has weakened age-authority principles in the family and in the civil hierarchy (Day n.d., Edel n.d.). Sons are no longer primarily dependent on their fathers for acquiring economic independence. Ejido Commission leaders have broken the monopoly of power by a gerontocracy of principales. Outside of the community, however, the political and economic potential of the ejido has not yet been fully realized. As the new ejidos such as Brindis develop, they may break the old community boundaries that contained and limited the power of the ejidatarios. With rising literacy, many Indians now read the *Codigo Agraria* sold in neighboring markets, and they are increasingly conscious of their rights. If unity across township boundaries could be achieved the new ejidos might become an effective political force in regional and national spheres.

Wage Labor and Occupational Specialties

The agriculturalists of the community do work as both exchange and paid laborers in the following forms: reciprocal exchange, part time labor and part-time independent agricultural work, and forestry.[1] Wage work is considered only a supplement to independent self-employment for all but twenty agricultural employees who work full-time on a finca within the township.

Payments for agricultural labor within the community are lower than the prevailing rate outside of the town and are higher in the fincas of hot country than in the highlands. When men work on the fincas of landowners in the neighboring township, they prefer payment by the task (*tarea*) rather than by the day, since they can usually complete two tareas by

1. See Richard N. Adams (1964:48) for a discussion of the forms of rural labor.

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465 working long hours. Thus they receive 12 pesos for about one and a half times as many hours as is worked locally for the prevailing wage of 6 pesos (ten hours in comparison with the usual day's work of six to seven hours in the town). For this reason they maximize the effort expended in getting to fields outside of their own township. The lower payment in town entails an obligation on the owner's part to reciprocate the labor, but the payment relieves him of an immediate demand on his time. Exchange labor without payment requires reciprocity within the same activity schedule: thus if a man assists someone else during harvesting, he expects that person to assist him during the same harvest period. If, however, he will be unable to reciprocate immediately, the payment of 6 pesos terminates an immediate obligation, but he will be expected to respond when he can if other requests should be made by this same farmer. Exchange labor without payment is contracted between relatives, compadres, and neighbors, using the network of established social ties to reinforce the obligation to reciprocate.

464 Agricultural work in the fincas in hot country is undertaken only when there is extreme need for supplementary income, or when a man is escaping the threat of being killed as a witch. In the 1920s, when the Indians had limited land resources and prevailing wages were low, some were forced to go to the fincas of the Argentino and Aregovia near Tapachula. Despite the economic necessity for their undertaking this work, the social pressure was so strong against it that they would leave early in the morning to avoid being jeered as they passed in the street. The women rarely accompanied them because they could produce pottery at home and supplement earnings. The prevailing rate now is 15 to 18 pesos per tarea, a half-day's work, but Indians work in the finca only when urgently pressed.

Nonagricultural labor in the sawmills is a source of employment for twenty-two Indians of the town. Lumber companies operating in the forested areas of Montebello Lake have employed Indians of the town for the past year. The wage offered, from 15 to 18 pesos a day, exceeds the 12-peso wage paid to agricultural laborers in the immediate area, but corresponds to that paid in hot country. The men must live at the sawmill, and supplies of tortillas made by their families are brought in on Wednesdays

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tion or when the animal is sick. For ceremonial occasions, the assistant of one of the mayordomos is expected to kill the bull which will provide the meat for a common meal. On other occasions, someone who is known to have a hand which gives flavor to the meat is asked to do it. The owner of the animal gives the butcher a half-liter of liquor.

Caponizing is a skill learned by some men with a few head of cattle by watching someone who knows how to perform the operation. If a man's wife is pregnant, he cannot perform the operation himself or even approach the bull, since his glance is very hot and will cause the bull to die. The procedure for making the request and for performing the operation is described below:

The owner goes to speak to one who knows how to caponize. When he arrives at the house of the caponizer, he says, "Are you in, Mam Gomez?" "I am," he replies if he is in. "Come in and sit down," he says.

"Pardon me, I have come to speak to you. Please, for the sake of the Virgin and for the sake of God, will you do nothing more than take out the little scrotum of my bull tomorrow?"

"Yes," replies the caponizer. "Do not worry, I shall take it out tomorrow."

"Good," replies the owner. "I shall wait for you in the house."

The next morning, the caponizer comes. The owner gives him some coffee to drink with a little bread. After they drink, they go to the hills to find the bull. They bring him to a wooded place and tie him by his hind legs to a branch of a tree. They then cast the body on the ground and tie the forelegs to the hind legs with a leather strap. They tie a string around the scrotum and sever the testes. After this, they drink a little. The owner's family joins them. The men blow up the scrotum to make a ball and the children play with it. They cut up the testes and broil them in a pan on the fire. After this is cooked, they pass it out to all of the people present with a tortilla and salt. Two liters of liquor are served. After the common meal, everyone goes to the house of the owner, and there they have a meal of chicken soup with two more liters of liquor. Those who do not drink liquor are served soda.

Very early the next day, the owner goes to see if his bull has died. If he

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dies, the owner announces on the loudspeaker of the local bars that he will sell meat at 5 pesos a portion. He preserves the hide to make saddle packs and tumplines. But the loss is great because he will not be able to buy a new bull with what he earns. If the bull lives, he will be better in three weeks and can carry loads. It is a very dangerous operation since the scrotum of a bull is very large. It is easier with a horse.

Surrounding the event with a ceremonial complex minimizes the development of commercialized relations between the caponizer and the owner. Most men who acquire several head of cattle or horses eventually learn to do the task themselves.

Handicrafts performed by men include rope-making from the tails of horses or from plant fibers, and weaving net bags. Most of the men who are assigned to the civil hierarchy spend their spare time in the cabildo making these items.

Carpentry is a skill now being practiced by two Indians of the town who "just learned by watching." They are called upon to help people in constructing the house frame, for which they receive 50 pesos in wages. A Ladino living on the margin of the town is a full-time specialist with his own shop. In addition to supervising house construction, he makes furniture and caskets to order.

New Economic Enterprises

In the operation of the new enterprises, which include cattle raising, cooperative ownership of a store, bars, and trucks, and liquor distilling, several patterns of organization have emerged. Some of these are based on preexisting social groupings, while others represent innovations. The social resources of management, credit operations, and the development of new skills within these local enterprises are of significance in preparing Indians for new occupations in the wider society.

Cattle raising. The most traditional organization is found in the case of cattle raising. Cattle have been in the town at least as far back as the 1915 revolutionary period when informants indicate that most of the

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Ladino butchers in the neighboring town. The cows are not milked either for local consumption or sale. Fertilizers are for the most part wasted since the cattle roam freely in the communal pasture lands except in the case of a few corrals owned by families. Hides are cured rather crudely and are used for saddle packs or protective aprons by the men, but none are sold.

The cooperatives. The notion of a cooperative to mobilize capital had been introduced by the I.N.I. in 1957 with the inauguration of a store owned by over one hundred members of the community. In the first years of its existence, the cooperative had some difficulties, primarily in convincing the Indians that when the returns on shares were lower in any year from prior levels, it did not indicate that the agents were stealing the money.

The cooperative store was bought by the Indians of the town from the I.N.I. in 1964 after the members had some trouble receiving returns on their shares. There are now one hundred and twenty-two members. The profits of 1965 were reinvested in the purchase of the corn-grinding mill. Current profits at the store are lent at 5 percent per month interest. The store grosses 80 to 100 pesos in sales daily, and the mill grossess 100 pesos. The wages paid to the storekeeper are 300 pesos and to the miller 250 per month.

Now that the cooperative is independent of the government, one of the stated policies is not to sell a single share to a Ladino or member of another community. "We do not want to give gifts to the Ladinos," the secretary of the cooperative told me. He added, "There was a Ladino in Teopisca who wanted to join with 5,000 pesos, but we wouldn't let him in. If you let them in, they would come to dominate the pueblo." The cooperative store does not share profits with the consumers but gives dividends. The 11,380-peso assets in the year 1965 were reinvested in stock and in the purchase of corn at harvest which was then sold at one and a half or two times the sale price.

The Indians developed their first independent cooperative in the ownership of a *marimba,* a musical instrument like a xylophone, operated by eight men of the community. This enterprise failed because the players never developed sufficient skill to be commissioned to play outside of town.

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to cook their meal in the yard of the church. They threatened to beat the priest with the wood, and he retreated into the church. He later announced that he would not give mass, or weddings, or baptism. We did not mind that he did not give the mass or would not give weddings, but the people were frightened if he would not give baptism. The mayordomos had a meeting, and they agreed to give up drinking in the church if the priest would continue to give baptism, but they would no longer care for the pigs or bring wood for him without payment. We pay him fifteen pesos for an ordinary mass and forty pesos for a singing mass, so he should pay us for help. The priest was in agreement with the mayordomos.

As a result of this edict, the drinking has stopped and the mayordomos no longer eat the common meal in the church yard. Drinking was an act linked to eating, since the round of liquor served before the meal was "to prepare the stomach," and the drink after the meal was "to wash down the food." The shift to the house of the cofrade was a ready alternative in this community where the household is a recognized ritual domain.

The priest's control over the church has extended to control over the donation boxes and the saints' images. He now receives the money donated to the saints and does not permit a public accounting of the funds. Because of this, the civil officials accuse him of stealing some of the money. A recent incident recounted below by one of the prayer-reciters led to even more severe censure:

The bishop visited our church, and when he looked under the silk robes of the Virgin Santa Lucia he found a wooden dress covered with gold paint. He told the priest to have the cloth dress removed. The people were very upset by this since they are very proud of the dresses bought for the Virgin. One of the prayer-reciters dreamed that the Virgin appeared before her in tears, saying she did not want to appear nude in public. We [the group of prayer-reciters] went to see the bishop to demand that the Virgin should wear her dress in church and that the priest be sent out of the town. The bishop refused. He said the Virgin did not feel cold because she was just a statue. Ha! How could she not feel cold?